

Article - Natural Resources

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§5–102.1.

(a) (1) In this section, the term “forestry” includes activities prescribed by a licensed professional forester in accordance with § 7–101 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article.

(2) “Forestry” does not include the clearing of land as a prelude to a change in the use of land.

(b) Forestry, as prescribed by a person licensed as a forester under Title 7 of the Business Occupations and Professions Article and in accordance with accepted silvicultural principles, as defined by the Society of American Foresters, constitutes a traditional, fundamental, beneficial, and desirable use of the State’s forest resource. Forestry is an important land management tool that contributes significantly to the economy of the State by the support of a vital forest products industry, as well as to the health of forests and their wildlife, water quality, and recreational benefits by the sustainment of forest productivity and wildlife habitats.

(c) In Maryland, forestry, including the harvest and transport of forest products, is often carried out in close proximity to populated areas. Other than development for more intensive uses, this harvest of timber may represent a major source of income for the profitable use of private property.

(d) (1) Retention, management, and expansion of the State’s forested resources are critical to the health and vitality of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, rural Maryland, and forest resource–based industries.

(2) It is the intent of this subsection to:

(i) Encourage forestry practices in local comprehensive plans developed in accordance with Title 1, Subtitle 4 or Title 3 of the Land Use Article; and

(ii) To express the General Assembly’s intent that local planning and zoning restrictions that impact silvicultural practices may not be more stringent than restrictions imposed by State law and regulation.

(e) Since it is in the State and public interests to preserve the forest land base and other natural resources, a local government with planning and zoning powers shall support forestry by a reasonable exercise of these powers, including the

consideration, development, and interpretation of planning and zoning requirements that beneficially impact the efficient and economic practice of forestry in a manner consistent with the local government's implementation of the visions listed in § 1–201 of the Land Use Article.

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